



GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

Testimony in Support for Raised Bill No HB 5379 An Act Concerning Various Election Administration Procedures Related to Registrars of Voters.

Senator Flexer, Representative Fox and Members of the GAE Committee, my name is Timothy De Carlo, and I am a Registrar of Voters from the City of Waterbury, the Chair of the New Haven County ROVAC Association and the Chairman of ROVAC Legislative Committee. I am here today to testify in support of HB 5379.

Upon passage, HB 5379 would repeal section 9-192a, which would remove an elections training unit that has never actually existed since its passage in 2005. This training unit is not related to the certification training that was passed in 2015 and appears in Public Act No. 15-224 and would not affect the current certification training program that is ongoing with the University of Connecticut's Connecticut Information Technology Institute, (CITI).

The proposed legislation also makes changes to 9-35a, 9-172a and 9-172b regarding the prescribed time a voter registration list is to be printed. Prior to the use of the Connecticut Voter Registration System, (CVRS), voter registration lists were printed annually prior to an election. It was during these registration sessions that a voter would appear in person to have their name, political party and address added, or changed. It was only during these sessions when a voter could make changes to their registration due to the fact that the voter list needed to be sent to a printer for printing prior to an election.

The Secretary of the States office introduced the use of CVRS in the late 1990s allowing for the use of in-house electronic voter lists. Since that time Title 9 has also changed and a voter no longer needs to appear in person to make changes to their registration. Removing these sections would simply mirror how voter registrations and voter lists are currently produced in all 169 towns.

ROVAC is also asking for a change to 9-16 which would allow for the option of including the town's Internet web site in order to give notice for the time and place of the registration enrollment sessions that take place the week prior to a primary or general election. These sessions are not noticed publicly by use of legal notice, instead registrars send press releases to their local newspapers asking that the session is noted in the newspaper that is circulated in town. Many times, these notices are not printed or are printed too late and outside of the window the enrollment session is required to be noticed. Allowing the option of noticing enrollment sessions on the town web site can help guarantee that the notice can appear on time and for multiple days instead of one time in a newspaper.

This bill would also remove the Board of Voter Admissions from the statutes which are no longer in use. Prior to changes in Title 9 a citizen would need to appear in person and take an oath in order to be admitted as a voter. The Board of Voter Admission were a group of locally elected individuals who besides a Registrar or Deputy Registrar of Voters, could administer the oath of an elector. This process became outdated once voter registration cards could be accepted through the mail.

Finally, HB 5379 makes changes to the Election Day process; first it allows those who serve in the position of Tabulator Tender to reside outside of the town in which they are working. The residency requirement was more than likely and oversite when this position was created upon the use of election tabulators in 2005. Secondly, this bill would allow registrars to file the “wet signature” Moderator Return with their Town Clerk instead of the Secretary of the State’s Office. Currently the return is filed electronically to the Secretary’s Office and then a page is printed and mailed to the office containing the “wet signature”. ROVAC supports the continuation of electronically filing the Moderator Return with the Secretary of the State’s Office and keeping locally, the “wet signature” on file.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you this afternoon. ROVAC is committed to working to strengthen elections in Connecticut. Therefore, we are more than willing to work with any parties to create JFS language should the committee wish to do so on this pending legislation.